

INTERPRETING PROCLUS IN 11<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> C. BYZANTIUM.  
JOHN ITALOS, EUSTRATIOS OF NICAEA, NICHOLAS OF  
METHONE

Although it is only after 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> c. that we witness a considerable increase in the number of manuscripts containing Proclus' works, thanks in part to the work of intellectuals such as George Pachymeres (1242-c.1310),<sup>1</sup> Proclus was regularly read and even admired by Byzantine intellectuals of the 11<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> c. as one of the most important Late-Antique philosophers. When considering the development of Ancient philosophy, Byzantine scholars such as Michael Psellos refer to Proclus' work as the greatest height ever attained by Hellenic wisdom.<sup>2</sup> Psellos' pupil John Italos seems to believe that Proclus not only exemplifies authentic Platonism, but also represents the standard view of the “Greek” philosophers on this or that particular issue. Others went even further than this in endorsing Proclus' views with little concern for their incompatibility with Christian dogmata. This provoked a reaction by ecclesiastic authority and more conservative theologians, who saw a threat in Proclus and his Byzantine readers. This array of attitudes is embodied by three of the most relevant 11<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> c. Proclus interpreters, John Italos, Eustratios of Nicaea, and Nicholas of Methone.

### 1. JOHN ITALOS

It has been stated repeatedly that the condemnation of John Italos (1082),<sup>3</sup> Michael Psellos' pupil and consul of the philosopher after him, was intended as a condemnation of the 11<sup>th</sup> c. Neoplatonic trend in Byzantium.<sup>4</sup> Certainly both conservative theologians and the ecclesiastic authority had regarded Neoplatonism as highly problematic since the time of Psellos.<sup>5</sup> However, the charges (*anathemata*) against Italos contained in the *Synodikon* are directed more towards a set of generic philosophical standpoints contradicting Christian dogmata than towards undermining one school of ancient philosophy, like Neoplatonism, in favour of another.<sup>6</sup> Political reasons may

1 Among the exceptions to this trend is Proclus' commentary on the *Timaeus*, which is preserved in earlier manuscripts. See Westerink/Combes 1986: lxxiv. Pachymeres is known for having copied Proclus' commentaries on the *Parmenides* and the *Alcibiades I*. On the first, preserved in the *Parisinus gr. 1810*, see Westerink 1989: x-xi, Steel 1999: 288-291, Steel/Macé 2006: 77-99. On the latter, preserved in the *Neapolitanus gr. 339* (III. E. 17), see Segonds 1985: cxii-cxv. On Pachymeres Neoplatonic scholarship, see Golitsis 2008: 60.

2 Michael Psellos, *Chronographia*, 6,38,3-5.

3 On Italos' biography, see Skoulatos 1980: 150-153, n. 90; Rigo 2001. We have no reason to believe, like most scholars after Joannou 1956: 11-13, that Italos was of Norman origin.

4 See e.g. Cacouras 2007: 178-179.

5 See e.g. Gouillard 1976: 315-321.

6 For text of the *Synodikon* concerning Italos, see Gouillard 1967: 56-71, 188-202. On the trial itself, see Clucas 1981, to be updated with Gouillard 1983; 1985 and Darrouzès 1984. See also Browning 1975: 11-15.

also lurk behind Italos' condemnation: Italos' acquaintance with members of the Doukas family and with the anti-Komnenian entourage are likely to have caused a reaction by the new Emperor Alexios I Komnenus (1081-1118), who, together with his brother Isaak Sebastokrator, was the driving force behind Italos' final condemnation.<sup>7</sup>

Italos' *damnatio memoriae* is reflected in the poor circulation of his work<sup>8</sup> and the depiction of his character in Anna Komnena's *Alexias*, which portrays Italos as a deceiving sophist, fond of Aristotle's philosophy as well as Proclus', with a stereotyped vocabulary discriminating against him for his Italian origins.<sup>9</sup> Even though it is commonly accepted that the *anathemata* against Italos does not reflect on his thought philologically,<sup>10</sup> modern scholars often tend to reproduce the Byzantine view of Italos as a mediocre scholar whose philosophy was unoriginal and who was unversed in theology; according to this view, Italos nevertheless attempted to reconcile Christianity with ancient philosophy in a new way and rationalized the Christian dogmata in the same way 13<sup>th</sup> c. medieval Latin masters did.<sup>11</sup> Little work has been done on the institutional context of Italos' activity and its reflection on Italos' philosophical treatises, which were probably addressed to students and members of the royal family, such as emperor Michael VII Doukas himself.<sup>12</sup> Nor has Italos' conception of himself in regard to Ancient philosophical tradition been sufficiently investigated, i.e. whether Italos is merely reporting and discussing Antique philosophical standpoints as a matter of relative interest, or is actually endorsing them as a reflection of his own philosophical views.<sup>13</sup>

Given that this issue cannot be fully addressed in the present contribution, I shall simply point out, as an example, that Italos' preference for Greek philosophy is declared accidentally (QQ 43,2-3) in the introduction to a treatise addressed to Michael's brother, Andronikos Doukas, although Greek philosophy is compared with that of Assyria and Egypt here and not with Christianity. Instead, formulations such as *κατὰ τὸν ἔξω σοφοὺς* or *ώς Ἑλληνές φασι* introduce Italos' treatment of a philosophical problem and make it clear that he is reporting antique philosophical standpoints, rather

7 Anna Komnena, *Alexias*, V,9,5. Cf. Gouillard 1985: 167; Angold 2000: 50-54.

8 See Rigo 2001: 65.

9 See Anna Komnena, *Alexias*, V,8,1-8. On Anna's depiction of Italos, see Arabatzis 2002.

On Anna's discriminating vocabulary, see Hunger 1987: 39. The same *topos* concerning Italos' Italian origin is present in the Lucianesque *Timarion*, 44,1117-1123 (12<sup>th</sup> c.).

10 See e.g.; Stephanou 1933: 421; Joannou 1956: 26-29; Gouillard 1976: 310-315; Clucas 1978: 140-162.

11 This view, though to a different extent, does seem to pervade most contributions on Italos, for instance, Uspenskij 1891; Salaville 1930: 141-145; Stephanou 1933; 1949: 119 Dujčev 1939; Joannou 1956; Lauritzen 2007.

12 Moreover, it is clear that among the philosophical treatises edited by Joannou there is some material, such as QQ 44, that does not belong to Italos himself, but rather to his students.

13 See e.g. Wolska 1957 and V. Ivánka 1958 on Joannou 1956. See also the stimulating observations of Giocarinis 1964: 167, n.24. An attempt at discussing this issue is sketched in Clucas 1978: 162-168. For overview on Italos' thought, see Niarchos 1978 (unavailable to me).

than his own.<sup>14</sup>

Proclus' name appears, along with that of Iamblichus, in the documents of the trial against Italos, as the latter rightly or wrongly used the form ἐπιστρέφειν, with all its Neoplatonic flavor, to describe the Son's conversion to the Father.<sup>15</sup> As a matter of fact, Proclus is frequently quoted by Italos in his philosophical treatises. Just as his pupil Eustratios does, Italos often identifies the position of the “platonists” (οἱ ἀπὸ πλάτωνος) with that of Proclus, as if the latter exemplified authentic Platonism.<sup>16</sup> The same holds true for Italos' references to the positions of the “Greek wise men”, which are always described using Proclus' phrasing<sup>17</sup>, as well as for the expression “the Greek theologians” (οἱ παρ' αὐτοῖς θεολόγοι), which reflects Psellos' description of Proclus as the “chief of the most theological of the Greeks”.<sup>18</sup> All of these references introduce Proclus' opinions on various matters, and can hardly be regarded as reflecting Italos' own thought. Moreover, his claim that in dealing with issues such as the self-subsistence of a substance one should consider what the Greeks philosophers said, “for they are the masters of this science...even though often their teachings contradict our pious dogmas” demonstrates Italos' aim of discussing philosophical issues through consideration of the opinions of ancient philosophical authorities on the same matters and, concomitantly, his careful professional deontology,<sup>19</sup> reflecting concerns similar to Psellos' statements on the limits a Christian should consider when treating ancient philosophical matters.<sup>20</sup>

Italos explicitly mentions Proclus' *Elements of Theology* (prop. 67) when discussing the whole and parts theory (QQ 15, 16,6-13), which the author links to Proclus' idea of a thing's threefold modes of existence, κατ' αἰτίαν, καθ' ὑπαρξίν, κατὰ μέθεξίν, contained in the same work (prop. 65). By the same token, reflecting similar Proclean statements from this work,<sup>21</sup> Italos' reference (QQ 68, 113,9-21) to particular souls imitating that which is prior to them – on the ground that the World-Soul (ἡ τοῦ παντὸς ψυχὴ) imitates that which is prior to it, “although it would be impious to state that the world is animated, there is no obstacle in providing an interpretation of this” (QQ 68, 113,138-141) – is not presented as Italos' view, but as an opinion “according to the pagan philosophers” (κατὰ τοὺς ἔξω σοφοὺς), once again a probable reference to Proclus.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, in mentioning the Neoplatonic distinction between causes and concomitant causes, which should have been

14 Cf. e.g. John Italos, QQ 4,6,24; 5,8,36; 68,138; 90,13.

15 See Gouillard 1985: 147,199-203.

16 John Italos, QQ, 3, 4,5-6; 42, 52,29. Many other occurrences of this kind are not signaled in Joannou's *apparatus fontium*.

17 E.g. John Italos, QQ, 5, 8,36; 24, 25,4; 68, 113,138; 90, 136,13.

18 E.g. John Italos, QQ, 7, 9,10; 68, 109,1. See Michael Psellos, *Theologica*, 22, xxx, 39.

19 See John Italos, 7, 9,6-9. On this and other similar passages, see Gouillard 1976: 313-314. Obviously this statement by Italos has nothing to do with the 13<sup>th</sup> c. averroist double truth theory, as claimed by Podskalsky 1977: 115.

20 E.g. Michael Psellos, *Theologica*, 74, 297,145-149. On this Psellos' concern, see Lemerle 1977: xxx xxx.

21 Proclus, *El. Theol.*, prop. 204, 178,31-33. See below xxx.

22 Ibid., 57, 56, 8-11.

corrected by a Christian author through identification of the true causes with God alone,<sup>23</sup> Italos makes it clear that such a distinction stems from Plato, probably on the ground that such an attribution is supported by the Neoplatonists themselves.<sup>24</sup>

All of these examples suggest that in many respects Italos' attitude had more in common with the modern historian of philosophy, than with a philosophical approach to issues discussed by Ancient and Late-Antique philosophers. Somewhat more autonomous reference to Proclus is made in Italos' treatment of the afore-mentioned whole and parts theory and its relation with the notion of wholeness (QQ 90). Despite a reference (QQ 90, 136,10-13) to the “pagan philosophers” and the idea that the cause is superior to that which it causes,<sup>25</sup> Italos seems to elaborate on several hints contained in Proclus' work, identifying the whole-before-parts with the mode of existence *κατ' αἰτίαν*, the whole-of-parts with the mode *καθ' ὑπαρξίν* and the whole-in-parts with the mode *κατὰ μέθεξίν*. In fact, though it is reminiscent of props. 65-67 of the *Elements of Theology*, Italos' argument regards the whole-before-parts as a paradigmatic cause (QQ 90, 136,7) rather than Proclus' form of each thing pre-existing in the cause.<sup>26</sup> What follows, however, reflects Proclus' metaphysics more closely: “every procession”, writes Italos (QQ 90, 136,19-20), explaining the manner in which that which is caused is found in the cause, “takes place through likeness of the secondary to the primary, and of the secondary to that which comes after it” (*Πᾶσα πρόοδος δι' ὁμοιότητα γίνεται τῶν δευτέρων πρὸς τὰ πρότερα καὶ τῶν μετὰ ταῦτα πρὸς τὰ δεύτερα*). As a matter of fact, prop 29 of Proclus' *Elements of Theology* reads as follows: “all procession is accomplished through likeness of the secondary to the primary” (*Πᾶσα πρόοδος δι' ὁμοιότητος ἀποτελεῖται τῶν δευτέρων πρὸς τὰ πρῶτα*).

The most relevant of Italos' passages seeming to fit the charges made against him by his contemporaries is that of QQ 86, which has been related to the charge of accepting the transmigration of the soul and the denial of the resurrection of the body.<sup>27</sup> Here however, taking a cue from John of Damascus' discussion on resurrection as found in his *De Fide Orthodoxa*,<sup>28</sup> Italos merely states in philosophical terms that the form is that which defines the essence of a thing, whereas matter is subject to change and corruption. Thus, there is no obstacle, Italos maintains, in admitting the resurrection of bodies, for they resurrect without their corruptible components, such as nails or hairs, as they are materially present in the living body.<sup>29</sup> Nor does Italos

23 See below xxx for Nicholas of Methone's interpretation of this distinction.

24 Italos' account is very close to that of Proclus, In Tim., 1,263,19-30. See also Simpl., In Phys., 3,16-19. The distinction between causes and concomitant causes might be traced back, in its general terms, to Plato, Phaedo 99a; Timaeus, 46d.

25 See Proclus, El. Theol., props. 7; 75.

26 Proclus, El. Theol., prop. 67, 64,3-4.

27 See Lauritzen 2009: 162, on the basis of Synodikon Orthodoxiae, 57,193-194; Anna Komnena, Alexias, 5,9,7,12. Yet, this Italos treatise seems a better fit for the content of Synodikon Orthodoxiae, 59,225-228.

28 Johannes Damascenos, De Fide Orthodoxa, 100.

29 See John Italos, QQ, 86, 134,13-15. Astonishingly, probably through a common but

support the Platonic metempsychosis<sup>30</sup> or diverge on this point, i.e. the resurrection of the body, from his master Michael Psellos, who is in fact the very source of this Italos treatise.<sup>31</sup>

Another interesting text (QQ 92, 145,22-36) discusses causality in regard to matter. Here Italos supports his conclusion that matter cannot have been caused without intermediaries with propositions 58 and 59 of Proclus' *Elements of Theology*, stating that causation involving a greater number of causes leads to something more composite than that involving fewer causes.<sup>32</sup> On this basis, Italos tackles the idea that the First Principle and matter are equally simple, the First Cause producing matter directly, in a way that is reminiscent of the Late-Antique debate on matter reported in Proclus' criticism of Plotinus' view on matter-evil.<sup>33</sup> Interestingly, Italos (QQ, 92, 145,24-29) rejects Proclus' conception of matter as produced by the One directly<sup>34</sup> and endorses Plotinus' view that, since matter is evil, it cannot be good or produced by the Good, for in this manner that which causes matter would itself be evil.<sup>35</sup> But to state that matter is produced through intermediaries would be inappropriate as well, Italos writes (QQ 92, 145,29-34): “if so, matter won't be some last being, nor the worse, as they believe, nor simple. In fact, as has already been said, that which is produced by a greater number of causes is not simple, but derives from something else, and is worse than it” (καὶ εἰ τοῦτο, οὐκ ἔσται τι τῶν ὄντων ἔσχατον οὐδὲ χεῖρον, ὡς οἰονται, οὐδὲ ἀπλοῦν· τὸ γάρ ἐκ πλειόνων αἰτίων ὡς εἴρηται παρηγμένον οὐχ ἀπλοῦν, ἀλλ' ἐκ τινων ἄλλων, καὶ τούτων ἐκείνου χειρόνων). Here the argument is once again derived from prop. 58 and 59 of Proclus' *Elements of Theology* on being simple or composite according to the number of causes producing something. Italos rejects the possibility that matter is composite and also Proclus' idea that “the last being is, like the first, perfectly simple”,<sup>36</sup> on the ground that according to the same Proclus: “if the extreme of being are produced by fewer and simpler causes, the intermediate existences by more, the latter will be composite. For the last being is, like the first, perfectly

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unidentified Greek source, this very same argument is literally present in Augustinus, *Enchiridion*, XXIII, 89, 97,58-77.

30 In this regard I agree with Clucas 1981: 157-158. Lauritzen 2009: 162 holds the opposing view.

31 See Michael Psellos, *Phil. Min.* II, 28, 103,16-104,13. The editor of this text rightly suggests that Psellos' reference (Michael Psellos, *Phil. Min.* II, 28, 104,1-2 = John Italos, QQ, 86, 134,9-10) to form as that which characterizes men's essence is found in Plotinus, *Enneads*, VI,3,9,32-36.

32 Compare John Italos, QQ, 92, 145,22-24 (καὶ πᾶν τὸ ἐκ πλειόνων παρηγμένον αἰτίων εἶναι σύνθετον, καὶ ἀπλοῦν τὸ μὴ ἐκ τοιούτων) with Proclus, *El. Theol.*, prop. 59, 56,28-29 (*Πᾶν τὸ ὑπὸ πλειόνων αἰτίων παραγόμενον συνθετώτερόν ἔστι τοῦ ὑπὸ ἐλαττόνων παραγομένου*).

33 Plotinus, *Enneads*, I,8,7,16-23. On Plotinus' view on this subject see O'Meara 1997; 2005. For Proclus' answer see Proclus, *De malorum Subsistentia*, 5-6, 179,35-183,26. On Proclus' criticism of Plotinus' view see Opsomer 2001; 2007.

34 Proclus, *De malorum subsistentia*, 35, 218,6-10; In Tim., 1,384,30-385,17; *El. Theol.*, 59, 56,36-37.

35 Cf. Opsomer 2007: 174-176.

36 Proclus, *El. Theol.* 58, 56,36-37.

simple, because it proceeds from the first alone; but the one is simple as being above all composition, the other as being beneath it".<sup>37</sup> So, implies Italos, if one admits that matter is created through intermediaries, not only can it not be simple, but it cannot be composite either, for matter as the last term is, according to the same Proclus', beneath composition itself.<sup>38</sup>

Italos' conclusion of his discussion on matter is somewhat interesting (QQ, 92, 145,35-36): "therefore, matter, in the way they [scil. the pagan philosophers] state its existence, does not exist". This, together with the title of Italos' treatise as transmitted by the manuscript tradition of the text ("Treatise demonstrating that matter does not exist the way the Greek philosophers say"), demonstrates that Italos is not really denying God's free will by admitting creation through intermediaries.<sup>39</sup> On the contrary, according to the previously mentioned approach, i.e. the discussion of ancient philosophical standpoints according to their inner principles and methods, Italos is attempting to demonstrate the internal contradictions of Ancient philosophical views of matter: if one starts from the philosophers' assumptions, contends Italos, then he will reach the paradoxical conclusion that matter does not exist, for be it simple or composite, directly or indirectly produced, from all these opinions will follow an inconsistency.<sup>40</sup> Interestingly, in the scope of the present contribution, the source of the rejected arguments is mostly Proclus and Italos seems more sympathetic to Plotinus' views on the subject.

In another text Italos claims (QQ 4, 6,14-16) that "we have often said and will now repeat that knowledge exists as a mediation between the knower and what is known, and in the knower knowledge coincides and becomes similar to it" (εἴρηται πολλάκις ἡμῖν καὶ νῦν ῥηθήσεται, ὡς ἡ γνῶσις μεταξὺ γινώσκοντός τε καὶ γινωσκομένου ὑπάρχει καὶ ἐν τῷ γινώσκοντι καὶ σύνδρομος αὐτῷ καὶ αὐτῷ ἔοικυν). This statement almost literally echoes Proclus' reference to truth in his commentary on the *Timaeus* as conformity between the knower and the known, where he writes: "that is why truth is the conformity of the knower with that which is known" (καὶ διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ἀλήθεια εἶναι ἡ πρὸς τὸ γινωσκόμενον ἐφαρμογὴ τοῦ γιγνώσκοντος).<sup>41</sup> There is an even greater correspondence with a passage from Proclus' *De decem dubitationibus circa providentiam* as reported by Italos' master, Michael Psellos, in his treatise on the predetermination of death: ... ὡς ἡ γνῶσις μέση οὖσα τοῦ γινωσκομένου καὶ τοῦ γινώσκοντος ὥρμηται μὲν ἀπὸ τοῦ γινώσκοντος, εἰλεῖται δὲ περὶ τὸ γινωσκόμενον καὶ ὥμοιωται τῷ γινώσκοντι.<sup>42</sup> Notably, Italos not only poaches from Proclus through such an indirect

37 Ibid., 58, 56, 30-32.

38 John Italos, QQ 92, 145,34-35.

39 This view is held by Lauritzen 2009: 163.

40 This has been ignored by Joannou 1956: 66-78.

41 Proclus, In Tim., 2,287,3-5. This passage will be quoted by Italos' pupil Eustratios and attributed to Aristotle himself, in *In VI EN*, 268,19-21. Italos' passage might also refer to Proclus, In Prm., 899,17-21.

42 Michael Psellos, *De omnifaria doctrina*, app.1, 101,35-37, quoting from Proclus, *De decem dubitationibus circa providentiam*, I,2,7,13,2-4.

source as Psellos, but the content of this statement is itself, despite its Proclean derivation, rather harmless from the perspective of Orthodoxy<sup>43</sup> as it simply reproduces the standard theory on truth traditionally endorsed by Late-Antique commentators.<sup>44</sup>

Italos seems to be very careful in dealing with Ancient philosophical material. When discussing the aforementioned idea, ascribed to the ancient philosophers, that the soul imitates that which is prior to it in the same way as the World Soul participates in the principle prior to it,<sup>45</sup> Italos tackles (QQ 68, 113,145-146) Proclus' view on the manifold of souls as originating from and reverting to the primal Soul<sup>46</sup> and the related metaphysical principle that every manifold must refer to a first term of the series. For, "if something exists in the whole, then the same thing must also be considered to exist in the parts" (QQ 68, 113,146-150).<sup>47</sup> Italos' comment that (QQ 68, 113,146): "as a matter of fact we do not espouse this", i.e. Proclus' idea that a manifold soul must be traced back to a unique Primal Soul, clearly demonstrates the author's disassociation from the subject under discussion, probably due to Christian concerns.<sup>48</sup>

This last reference may be used to sketch some conclusive remarks on Italos' treatment of Neoplatonism and, in particular, Proclus.<sup>49</sup> As I said before, a general study of Italos' methodology is still lacking and the present contribution is in no way intended to produce definitive conclusions on this topic. Having said that, one could argue concerning Italos' interpretation of Proclus that, like Psellus, Italos regards Proclus as the most authoritative philosopher, best exemplifying ancient philosophical views on certain issues. Yet there is almost no evidence to suggest that Italos went further than this, endorsing Proclus' views as his own. Not only is Italos generally cautious in introducing ancient philosophical views, stressing that these cannot be reconciled with Orthodoxy, but when discussing issues such as matter or the World-Soul he rejects several of Proclus' standpoints. Since most references to Proclus are taken from the *Elements of Theology*, one could argue that Italos' interest in Proclus is a rather scholastic one, in the sense that Proclus is only used in regard to the general principles of his metaphysics, which are stated plainly and clearly in the *Elements of Theology*. On the contrary, Italos' pupil, Eustratios of Nicaea, seems to have considered Proclus in a much more favorable light, supporting this philosopher's views as if they were still current.

43 As a matter of fact precisely this Psellian passage will later be quoted by Nicholas of Methone, author of the 12<sup>th</sup> c. *Refutation of Proclus' Elements of Theology*. Cf. Lackner lx-lxi.

44 See e.g. David, Prol. Phil., 4,10-13; Simpl., In Cat., 12,32-13,4; Philop., In de An., 73,6-8; In Cat., 81,29-31. This theory might be traced back to Aristotle's view on truth as the conformity between definition and object. cf. e.g. Arist., Top., VI,10,148b1-3.

45 cf. supra xxx

46 Proclus, El. Theol., prop. 21, 24,25-27.

47 See e.g. Proclus, In Prm., 1112,26-32.

48 On this passage see also Gouillard 1976: 314.

49 For more information on Italos' Neoplatonic sources, particularly regarding his position on universal concepts, see Ierodiakonou 2009.

## 2. EUSTRATIOS OF NICAEA (ca.1150-ca.1120)

We know relatively little of Eustratios of Nicaea's biography. His extant works suggest that he was a court-theologian to emperor Alexios I Komnenos (1081-1118) involved in the most relevant theological controversies of his day.

<sup>50</sup> More importantly, he commented on book II of Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* and on books I and VI of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, probably at the request of Alexios' daughter Anna Comnena (1083-1153), who is generally regarded as the patron of a philosophical circle engaged in commenting on Aristotelian works that had not been commented on previously.<sup>51</sup> Yet, since we lack sufficient evidence linking the existence of such a circle or project directly to Anna, it is safer to refer these commentaries to Anna's private interests in ancient literature, as testified by Anna herself in *Alexias* and in the funeral oration written for her by George Tornikes.<sup>52</sup>

Eustratios, whom Anna praises as a brilliant dialectician,<sup>53</sup> is first mentioned in the official documents on John Italos' trial as a pupil of Italos and master in one of Constantinople's schools.<sup>54</sup> Italos' ghost was to haunt Eustratios later, in 1117, when he himself was charged with heresy for his views on Christology.<sup>55</sup> In fact, Eustratios' main persecutor, Niketas of Heraclea,<sup>56</sup> would recall his acquaintance with Italos as a sign of Eustratios' misconduct and unreliability.<sup>57</sup> More importantly, Niketas of Seida,<sup>58</sup> another of Eustratios' persecutors, not lacking proper rhetorical emphasis, would bring up Proclus and Simplicius among others pagan authors as the genesis of Eustratios' alleged theological mistakes.<sup>59</sup>

As a matter of fact, Eustratios' theological writings contain several references to Neoplatonic doctrines. One example is Eustratios' attempt to explain Christ's assumption of human nature by referring to the Plotinian view, as reported in Proclus' lost commentary on the *Enneads*, that the soul remains unaffected by the union with the body and that embodied souls are just an "appearance of the soul" (ἴνδαλμα τῆς ψυχῆς).<sup>60</sup> By means of this example, Eustratios intends to demonstrate that, insofar as it remains self-subsisting and self-perfect, the divinity of the divine *Logos* remains unaffected

50 On Eustratios' biography and bibliography see Skoulatos 1980: 89-91; Cacouros 2000.

51 See Browning 1962 (repr. 1977; 1990).

52 See Mullet 1984: 178; Frankopan 2009. Darrouzès 1970: 282, n. 69 raises doubts concerning the connection between Eustratios and Anna.

53 Anna Comnena, *Alexias*, XIV,8,9,10-11

54 See Gouillard 1985: 159. See also Gouillard 1976: 308.

55 On Eustratios' trial see Joannou 1952, 1954 and 1958, to be corrected by Darrouzès 1966; Grumel/Darrouzès 1989: 460-461 (n. 1003).

56 On Niketas see Browning 1963: 15-17.

57 Niketas of Heraclea, *Oratio Apologetica*, 304,4-15; Niketas Choniates, *Thes. Orth.*, PG140, 135-136.

58 On Niketas of Seida, see Zèsès 1976: xxx-xxx.

59 Niketas of Seida, Λόγος κατὰ Εὐστρατίου Νικαίας, 10,6-12.

60 Eustr. Or. II, 80,20-27. Proclus' commentary on the *Enneads* is witnessed by Michael Psellos, *Phil. Min. II*, 14,74,10-11. See Westerink 1959.

by its union with the human body in the incarnation. On the same issue Eustratios explains Christ's attributes of life and truth and their mode of existence in the *Logos* made flesh by claiming that “that which lives, lives by participating in life; that which is rational is such by having reason and thinking: every term that participates is secondary to the participated” (ζῶον δὲ τὸ ζῶον ὡς μετέχον ζωῆς, καὶ λογικὸν τὸ λογικὸν ὡς λόγον ἔχον καὶ διανοούμενον· ὅστερον δ’ ἄπαν τὸ μετέχον ἔστι τοῦ μετεχομένου),<sup>61</sup> a statement that resembles prop. 24 of Proclus' Elements of Theology: “all that participates is inferior to the participated, and this latter to the unparticipated” (Πᾶν τὸ μετέχον τοῦ μετεχομένου καταδεέστερον, καὶ τὸ μετεχόμενον τοῦ ἀμεθέκτου).

Indeed, one may contend that here Eustratios is merely using Proclus as a tool to support his theological standpoints. Eustratios' strategy may nevertheless have appeared hazardous in the eyes of his contemporaries. This is the impression one gets when reading Eustratios' statement that “the divinity is everywhere, but according to the nature proper to each thing” (Πανταχοῦ μὲν ἡ θεότης, ἀλλ’ οἰκείως πρὸς ἔκαστον), which is a Christian version of prop. 103 of Proclus' Elements of Theology, “All things are in all things, but in each according to its proper nature” (Πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν, *οἰκείως* δὲ ἐν *ἔκαστῳ*).<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, the title of Eustratios' treatise against the Armenians promises to reject monophysitism “by means of logical, physical and theological arguments” (ἐκ λογικῶν καὶ φυσικῶν καὶ θεολογικῶν ἐπιχειρήσεων), that is to say by referring to the three Proclean methods of inquiry<sup>63</sup> which had just been reiterated by scholars such as Michael Psellos and Eustratios' former master John Italos.<sup>64</sup> Unsurprisingly then, Proclus is the omnipresent shadow behind Eustratios' commentaries on books I and VI of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and book II of the *Posterior Analytics*. His preference for this Neoplatonic author is generally apparent in Eustratios' views on important issues such as causation and intellection theory.

On causation, Eustratios accepts Proclus' distinction between causes and concomitant causes, relying (276,21-22) on prop. 75 from Proclus' *Elements of Theology* (prop. 75) in defending that only the first are true causes “for they are the only ones that transcend that which they cause” (ὅτι καὶ μόνα τῶν αἰτιατῶν ἔξηρηται). Though, probably as a result of religious concerns, Eustratios simplifies Proclus' hierarchical structure of reality by eliminating intermediaries such as the henads and the different orders of Gods and souls, the commentator's general attitude towards Proclus' metaphysics remains a positive one. In fact, while describing the souls' noetic reversion to the First Cause, Eustratios (*In VI EN*, 348,36) maintains that this transpires “through intermediary realms” (διὰ τῶν μέσων διακόσμων), an expression used by

61 Eustr. Or. VII, 184,2-4.

62 This Proclean standpoint arises in the writings of Ps.-Dionysius several times, but never in way suggesting Eustratios' direct dependence upon Ps.-Dionysius.

63 Proclus, In Tim., I,8,4-5; In Parm., 912,38-39; 1039,11-13. See also Ammonius, In Isag., 45,5-15. On this, see Sheppard 1987; Gersh 2000 and Martijn 2010: 7-10, 67-71.

64 Michael Psellos, Theol. 54,xxx107-110; John Italos, 4, 5,4-6,5.

Proclus to describe the different realms or planes of being.<sup>65</sup> Discussing the eternal realities (*In VI EN*, 293,15-19) – those which, according to Eustratios, are described in Plato's *Timaeus* as always self-identical and imperishable<sup>66</sup> – Eustratios writes (294,14-16): “for through these creation is spread to the earthly realities and providence extends unto the very last being” (ώς δι’ αὐτῶν μέσων εἰς τὰ τῇδε χωρεῖν τὴν ποίησιν καὶ τὴν πρόνοιαν μέχρι καὶ τῶν ἐσχάτων διήκουσαν). Specialists in Neoplatonism will immediately recognize the Proclean vocabulary inherent in this argument on causation and providence. For example, in *Platonic Theology* Proclus argues that the father and creator of the Universe is celebrated throughout the *Timaeus*, as it “illuminates the paternal power and providence which extends from above until the last terms of the Whole” (πατρικὴν ἐμφαίνοντος δύναμιν καὶ πρόνοιαν, ἄνωθεν ἄχρι τῶν ἐσχάτων τοῦ παντὸς διήκουσαν);<sup>67</sup> or, as Proclus states in his commentary on the *Parmenides*, since a property such as greatness is found in the lower realms of being, “therefore this property extends from above unto the very last terms” (ἄνωθεν ἄρα διήκει καὶ μέχρι τῶν ἐσχάτων).<sup>68</sup>

Eustratios accepts this Neoplatonic top-down model of causation and its associate vocabulary. While stating that the soul must remain in a close relationship with the Intelligence, the commentator adds (*In VI EN*, 317,30-32): “so that the processions of beings also derive from the First Cause as in a chain, where the lower term is always connected with that superior to it and maintains a certain similarity with it” (ἴνα καὶ τῶν ὄντων αἱ πρόοδοι ἐκ τῆς πρώτης αἰτίας καθ’ εἰρμὸν γίνοιντο, ἀεὶ τοῦ ὑφειμένου συναπτομένου τῷ πρὸ αὐτοῦ καὶ τινα πρὸς ἐκεῖνο κεκτημένου ὁμοίωσιν). This passage summarizes Proclus' theory of causation, as is clear from the notion of “chain” (εἰρμός)<sup>69</sup> and the reference to “similarity” (όμοίωσις) as the trait peculiar to the entire process.<sup>70</sup> In another passage, Eustratios states that (*In VI EN*, 288,18-21) “the substance of each thing that comes into being is considered according to its procession from the productive cause, whereas its perfection is considered from the perspective of its reversion to the productive cause following the desire of striving for it, insofar as each thing zealously attempts to imitate the productive cause according to its measure” (Ἐκάστου τῶν ὄντων ἡ γινομένων ἡ μὲν οὐσία κατὰ τὴν ἐκ τοῦ ποιητικοῦ αἰτίου θεωρεῖται πρόοδον, ἡ δὲ τελειότης κατὰ τὴν πρὸς ἐκεῖνο ἐπιστροφὴν τῆς πρὸς ἐκεῖνο ἀντιποιουμένου ἐφέσεως κάκεῖνο κατὰ μέτρον μιμεῖσθαι σπουδάζοντος). One would not be wrong to trace this argument back to Proclus' *Platonic Theology*, where it is stated that, “in fact, all things remain, proceed and revert upon the One. ...

65 Proclus, Plat. Theol., 6,26,16-17; In I Alc., 112,2-3; In I Eucl., 6,11-13.

66 Plato, *Timaeus*, 28A. See also Lexicon Suidae, Π, 1709,17-28.

67 Proclus, Plat. Theol., 5,102,5-7.

68 Proclus, In Parm., 854,29-30. See also In Parm., 811,12-14; 995,39-996,5; In Tim., 1,190,8-12; Theol. Plat., 3,41,12-14.

69 See e.g. Proclus, In Rem., 2,240,25-27; Theol. Plat., 6,14,5-10;

70 See e.g. Proclus, Theol. Plat., 6,78,23-29; El. Theol., prop. 29; prop. 132,29-30. This Eustratios statement is in general reminiscent of Proclus, Theol. Plat., 5,103,1-7, where the general rules mentioned by Eustratios is applied to the particular case of the different orders of gods.

Thus, union provides all secondary things with a stable union and unproceeding transcendence of their cause; subordination determines the procession of beings and their separation from the unparticipated and first monad; desire accomplishes the reversion of the existing things and their circular motion towards the ineffable” (Πάντα γὰρ καὶ μένει καὶ πρόεισιν καὶ ἐπιστρέφεται πρὸς τὸ ἐν ... καὶ ἡ μὲν ἔνωσις μόνιμον ἐνδίδωσι τοῖς δευτέροις ἄπασι καὶ ἀνεκφοίτητον τῆς ἑαυτῶν αἰτίας ὑπεροχῆν, ἡ δὲ ὕφεσις τὴν πρόοδον τῶν ὅντων ἀφορίζει καὶ τὴν ἀπὸ τῆς ἀμεθέκτου καὶ πρωτίστης ἐνάδος διάκρισιν, ἡ δὲ ἔφεσις τὴν ἐπιστροφὴν τῶν ὑποστάντων καὶ τὴν εἰς τὸ ἄρρητον ἀνακύκλησιν τελειοῦ).<sup>71</sup>

While comparing Aristotle's standpoints with those of the “followers of Plato”, Eustratios breaks the Late-Antique *topos* of harmony between Plato and Aristotle.<sup>72</sup> In this the commentator samples Plato in a way that occasionally makes it impossible to distinguish between Eustratios' exposition of Plato's views and the commentator's own views.<sup>73</sup> More importantly, when presenting the platonists' doctrine, Eustratios identifies it with that of Proclus. For example, in his commentary on book II of the *Posterior Analytics* (*In II A.Po.*, 195,28-30), Eustratius writes that “thus, the wholes before parts are, as the Platonists say, monadic principles: from each of them stems the series coordinated to it” (αἱ μὲν οὖν πρὸ τῶν μερῶν ὄλότητες, ὡς οἱ περὶ Πλάτωνα λέγουσιν, αἱ ἀρχικαὶ μονάδες εἰσίν, ἐξ ὧν ἐκάστης ὁ σύνστοιχος αὐτῇ ἀριθμὸς ἀπογεννᾶται). This passage introduces a long discussion of the whole and parts theory derived from props. 67, 68 and 69 of Proclus' *Elements of Theology* and, more importantly, is reminiscent of Proclus' statement in the *Platonic Theology* “that it is necessary that each monad causes the series coordinated to it” (ώς ἀνάγκη πᾶσαν μονάδα παράγειν ἀριθμὸν αὐτῇ σύνστοιχον).<sup>74</sup>

But Eustratios' most famous Plato-Aristotle doxography, which attracted the attention of 13<sup>th</sup> c. Latin readers of this text, introduces Eustratios' passionate defense of the Platonic Ideal Good in opposition to Aristotle's critique of it.<sup>75</sup> Here, Eustratios writes that the existence of the ideas is the major point of disagreement between the Platonists and Aristotle (*In I EN*, 41,29-30), and contends (40,22-23) that the Platonists “introduce the ideas as enypostatic divine thoughts”. He goes on supporting this view with Proclus' aforementioned theory of the whole and parts (*In I EN*, 40,34-35), and assimilates Proclus' whole-before-parts into the Platonic ideas, which Eustratios indifferently calls divine thoughts, forms and universals that

71 Proclus, *Theol. Plat.*, 2,41,20-28. See also *El. Theol.*, prop. 37,10-16. By the same token, Eustratios' sentence (*In VI EN* 288,20-21) κάκεῖνο κατὰ μέτρον μιμεῖσθαι σπουδάζοντος is reminiscent of Proclus' emphasis on participation as taking place according to the different degrees of capacity of each term of the causation process. See e.g. Proclus, *El. Theol.*, prop. 142,3-7.

72 On this *topos*, see Karamanolis 2007.

73 This has been already recognised by Lloyd 1987: 345.

74 Proclus, *Plat. Theol.* 3,7,29-8,1. On the role of Proclus' whole and parts theory in Eustratios, see Lloyd 1987.

75 On this text and its Latin tradition, see Giocarinis 1964; Mercken 1990: 415-419, 441-444.

transcend the forms in particulars and later-born concepts, i.e. concepts derived by abstraction from the data of sense-perception (*In I EN*, 40,24-27).<sup>76</sup> Unsurprisingly, Proclus is the source of Eustratios' account of the Platonic identification of the First Principle with the First and Highest Good (*In I EN*, 40,17-18), “insofar as it is the substantial Good that is the object of desire for all things” (ώς οὐσιῶδες ἀγαθὸν οὗ πάντα ἐφίεται), echoing Proclus' commentary on the *Republic*, where the author comments on Socrates' identification of the supreme object of all sciences with the Good: “for this object is the Good, the object of desire for all things” (ώς ἄρα τοῦτο ἐστιν τὸ ἀγαθόν. οὗ πάντα ἐφίεται).<sup>77</sup>

Eustratios deliberately refers to Proclus' vocabulary to counter Aristotle's definition of good in book I of the *Nicomachean Ethics* as that which everything desires, on the basis that Proclus himself criticizes this Aristotelian definition by using the same word of the Stagirite.<sup>78</sup> This is confirmed by Eustratios' subsequent claim (*In I EN*, 45,28-29) that the “word τάγαθὸν”, present in the Aristotelian lemma ἔτι δ' ἐπεὶ τάγαθὸν ισαγως λέγεται τῷ ὄντι,<sup>79</sup> is taken by the Platonists “in the sense of the first and universal Good” (ἐπὶ τοῦ πρώτου καὶ καθόλου ἐτίθετο), whereas the expression οὗ πάντα ἐφίεται, which opens book I of this Aristotelian work, refers to “the most universal and first Good” (τὸ καθολικώτατον δηλοῦ καὶ πρώτιστον), and concludes that (45,30-31) “as a matter of fact, if everything desires it (i.e. the Good), then it is by necessity above all things” (εἰ γὰρ πάντα ἐκείνου ἐφίεται, ὑπὲρ τὰ πάντα ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἐστί). Specialists in Neoplatonism will easily trace this sentence back to Proclus' statement in the *Elements of Theology* that “in fact if all beings desire the Good, it is clear that the First Good is beyond existing things” (εἰ γὰρ πάντα τὰ ὄντα τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἐφίεται, δῆλον ὅτι τὸ πρώτως ἀγαθὸν ἐπέκεινά ἐστι τῶν ὄντων),<sup>80</sup> which demonstrates once again that, when reporting the position of the “Platonists”, Eustratios refers to Proclus. Unsurprisingly then, some lines earlier (*In VI EN*, 45,15-18), the commentator had borrowed Proclus' distinction between secondary goods, which can be attained by this or that being, and the “common Good”, in the sense of the primal and transcendent Good, participated in by secondary goods.<sup>81</sup>

This identification remains in Eustratios' theory of intellection and concept-formation and here too, Eustratios means Proclus when referring to “Platonists”. While accounting for the different standpoints, Platonic and Aristotelian, concerning mathematical objects, Eustratios rightly contends (*In VI EN* 320,21-24) that according to Aristotle these are known “by

76 On this passage, see Giocarinis 1964: 172-174.

77 Proclus, In Remp., 1,269,12. See also Eustr., *In I EN*, 43,11-14, where the author ascribes to Plato the identification of the First and Supreme Good with the One. Compare this passage with Michael Psellos, Theol. 4,xxx,90-02.

78 Arist. Eth. Nic., I,1,1094a2-3: διὸ καλῶς ἀπεφήναντο τάγαθόν. οὗ πάντ' ἐφίεται.

79 Arist. Eth. Nic., I,6,1096a23.

80 Proclus, El. Theol., prop. 8,8,31-32

81 Proclus, El. Theol., prop. 8,8,32-9,8. For further evidence of Eustratios' dependence upon Proclus, see Giocarinis 1964: 183-190.

abstraction” (ἐξ ἀφαιρέσεως),<sup>82</sup> whereas “this standpoint did not please the Platonists who speculate on this topic, for according to them that which is derived by abstraction is worse than the data of sense-perception and physical realities, for they are derived from these and are later-born” (ἀλλὰ τοῦτο οὐκ ἡρεσκε τοῖς Πλατωνικῶς περὶ τοῦτο δοξάζουσι, διότι τὰ ἐξ ἀφαιρέσεως τῶν αἰσθητῶν ἔστι καὶ φυσικῶν χείρονα, ὡς ἐξ αὐτῶν τὴν γένεσιν ἔχοντα καὶ ὑστερογενῶς αὐτῶν ὑφιστάμενα). This paraphrases Proclus' argument against later-born concepts, the Aristotelian concepts derived from sense-perception, as being a reliable base for knowledge, as elaborated in his commentary on the *Parmenides*, where Proclus writes: “in fact, we will surely not contemplate later-born concepts. In fact, these are less noble than the data of sense-perception and the common elements inherent in them” (οὐ γάρ που περὶ τῶν ὑστερογενῶν ποιησόμεθα τὴν θεωρίαν· ταῦτα γὰρ αὐτὰ τῶν αἰσθητῶν ἔστιν ἀτιμότερα καὶ τῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς κοινῶν).<sup>83</sup>

Apparently, Eustratios' dependence upon Proclus' *Parmenides* commentary is foreshadowed by the author's ascription of the doctrine of ideas to “the followers of Parmenides and Plato”, a periphrasis that refers to the same Proclus as commentator of Plato's *Parmenides*.<sup>84</sup> Thus, from this work by Proclus, Eustratios borrows the description (*In I EN*, 47,4-11) of the two modes of existence of the forms, in the separate Intelligence and in the particular soul. The latter possesses parcel-wise the forms that are unified within the Intelligence, and grasps the forms by dancing around the Intelligence in a circle.<sup>85</sup> This very same argument is put forward by Eustratios in his commentary on book VI of the *Nicomachean Ethics* as his own view. Here the commentator remarks on the transient nature of knowledge proper in the particular soul, and contends (*In VI EN*, 317,26-28) that while transcending the lower potencies of the soul “it can grasp each of the intelligibles in a simple manner, though not simultaneously and eternally like the Intelligence properly so-called grasps them, but one by one, within a temporal dimension and passing from one to the other” (ἐκάστῳ τῶν νοητῶν ἀπλῶς ἐπιβάλλειν δύναται, οὐκ ἀθρόον οὐδὲ ἐν αἰῶνι ὡς ὁ κυρίως νοῦς καταλαμβάνων αὐτὰ ἀλλὰ καθ' ἐν καὶ ἐν χρόνῳ καὶ μεταβαίνων ἀφ' ἐτέρου εἰς ἔτερον). Elsewhere (*In VI EN*, 303,23-25) Eustratios insists that the soul can indeed grasp the intelligibles, “although not all together and all at once like the Intellect which is so in its substance, but embraces all things one by one and knows them singularly” (εἰ καὶ μὴ ἀθρόως καὶ ὁμοῦ ὡς ὁ καθ' ὑπαρξίν, ἀλλὰ καθ' ἐν περιεχομένῃ τὰ πάντα καὶ νοοῦσα καθ' ἐκαστον). Both these passages derive from Proclus: the former from his commentary on the *Timaeus*, where he writes that reason does not grasp “all things all at once, but passes from one to the other” (οὐ πάντα δὲ ἄμα, ἀλλὰ μεταβαίνων ἀπ' ἄλλων

82 See Arist. Phys., II,2,193b36-194a1.

83 Proclus, In Parm., 980,10-13, 892,31-35, 894,26-895,1. On Eustratios' account of the Platonic and Aristotelian standpoints on mathematical objects, see Trizio 2009a: 72-80.

84 See Steel 2002.

85 See Giocarinis 1964: 191; Steel 2002: 52-53. The general principle stated here can be traced back to Proclus, El. Theol. 194, 168,30.

ἐπ' ἄλλα);<sup>86</sup> the latter from his commentary on the *Parmenides*, where he writes that “the soul does not present itself as a whole to the intelligible contents of the intelligence all at once, for by its nature the soul cannot discern them all together” (*οὐτε γὰρ ὅλην αὐτὴν ὄμοι τοῖς τοῦ νοῦ παράγειν νοήμασιν· οὐ γὰρ ἀθρόως αὐτὰ πέφυκεν ὄραν*).<sup>87</sup>

Most Proclean doctrines discussed in Eustratios' commentary on book I of the *Nicomachean Ethics* – and presented by him as Platonic – are reiterated as Eustratios' own views in his commentary on book VI of the same work. More importantly, in the commentary on this later book, Proclus' influence is even more distinct. For example, Eustratios maintains that, when free from the passions, the soul is illuminated “by its proximity to the Intelligence” (*τῇ πρὸς νοῦ γειτνιάσει*), which is a *verbatim* quote from Proclus' *Platonic Theology*, where Proclus writes that the soul receives “a vigilant life from its proximity to the Intelligence” (*τὴν ἀγρυπνον ζωὴν ἐκ τῆς πρὸς τὸν νοῦ ἔχει γειτνιάσεως*).<sup>88</sup> More importantly, Eustratios defends (*In VI EN*, 303,19-21) the thesis that the soul “qua soul acts by unfolding” (*ός μὲν ψυχὴ ἀνειλιγμένως ἐνεργεῖ*) the intelligible content within discursive reasoning and syllogisms; whereas “the soul as participating in the Intelligence grasps the intelligibles in a simple manner” (*ός δὲ μετέχουσα νοῦ ἀπλῶς ἐπιβάλλει*). Not only is *ἀνειλιγμένως* the technical Proclean term to describe the soul as containing all forms in an unfolded manner,<sup>89</sup> but the very distinction between the two operations of the soul derives from Proclus' commentary on the *Timaeus*, where reason “qua reason acts in a transient manner” (*ός μὲν λόγος ἐνεργεῖ μεταβατικῶς*), that is to say discursively, whereas reason “as having intellection acts with simplicity” (*ός δὲ νοῶν μετὰ ἀπλότητος*).<sup>90</sup>

One striking example of Eustratios' identification with Proclus' doctrines is the following: in his commentary on book II of the *Posterior Analytics* Eustratios (*In II A.Po.*, 257,24-32) first presents two different concept-formation theories, Aristotle's induction from the particulars and Plato's recollection, then announces his own solution, which is a puzzle of pieces put together from Proclus' works (*In II A.Po.*, 257,35-37): “in the hierarchy of forms that which comes directly after a thing participates more clearly in that which comes directly before it. Thus, since the soul comes directly after the Intelligence, it participates in the Intelligence more than that which is farther from It” (*ἐν τῇ τάξει τῶν εἰδῶν τὰ προσεχῶς μετά τι μετέχει τρανότερον τοῦ προσεχῶς πρὸ αὐτῶν. ἐπεὶ οὖν ἡ ψυχὴ προσεχῶς μετὰ νοῦν, μετέχει τοῦ νοῦ μᾶλλον ἥπερ τὰ πόρρω τοῦ νοῦ*). As a matter of fact, in the *Elements of Theology* (prop. 193) one may read that “every soul derives its proximate existence from an Intelligence” (*πᾶσα ψυχὴ προσεχῶς ἀπὸ νοῦ ὑφέστηκεν*).

86 Proclus, *In Tim.* I,246,1-9.

87 Proclus, *In Prm.*, 1165,24-25 (English translation by Morrow/Dillon 1987: 517, slightly modified. On these passages, see Trizio 2009a: 90-99; Trizio 2009b: 86-94.

88 Proclus, *Plat. Theol.*, 1,66,23-24. see also Eustr. *In VI EN*, 317,19. On Eustratios' theory of the intellect and intellection, see also Ierodiakonou 2005: 80-81; Trizio 2009a: 98-99; Jenkins 2009: 120-128.

89 See Proclus, *In Euc.*, 16,10-16; *In Prm.*, 987,37-39.

90 Proclus, *In Tim.*, 1,246,6-7.

Eventually, going against Platonic metempsychosis, Eustratios will defend the Christian view that the soul was created together with the body,<sup>91</sup> but – against Aristotle – in accounting for the origin of the principles of our knowledge he consistently supports innatism with Proclus' vocabulary, as when he states that (*In II A.Po.*, 257,37-38) the self-evident principles of demonstrations that are present in the soul are “echoes” (*ἀπηχήματα*) of the Intelligence.<sup>92</sup>

Understandably, given the terrific number of Proclus quotations used by Eustratios in expounding his view on concept-formation and the status of the universals, the latter can hardly be considered the token of a nominalistic position, or a conceptualistic one. These interpretations may explain passages where Eustratios applies the traditional threefold distinction between universals – before the many, in the many and after the many – to specific problems such as the presence of two natures (divine and human) in one and the same subject (Christ).<sup>93</sup> However, when discussing the properties that characterize a universal proper Eustratios appears loyal to his favorite Neoplatonic source in stating that universality does not depend on thought and universals properly called so, described in Platonic terms as self-identical and self-subsisting beings with a certain causative power, are not thought dependent entities.<sup>94</sup>

Often Eustratios shapes his arguments with quotations from Christian authors, such as Gregory of Nazianzus,<sup>95</sup> whereas Ps.-Dionysius the Areopagite is only once mentioned explicitly in Eustratios' commentaries (*In I EN*, 4,37-38), with regard to the image of the “bloom of the intellect”,<sup>96</sup> which can be traced back to Proclus' reading of the Chaldean Oracles.<sup>97</sup> In fact, just before referring to the bloom of the intellect, Eustratios had written (*In I EN*, 4,37) that after becoming intelligent the soul “becomes divine as it is united with God in accordance with the One present in it” (*θεοειδῆς ὡς θεῷ ἐνώθεισα κατὰ τὸ ἐν αὐτῇ ἐγκείμενον ἔν*). Doubtless this passage derives from Proclus' assertion that the soul bears an image of the One which it must awake, “or how could we possibly become closer to the One, without awakening the one in our soul, which is an image of the One <...>? And how could we make this very same one and the bloom of the soul shine forth, without first performing an intellectual operation? (*Ἡ πῶς ἐγγυτέρω τοῦ ἐνὸς ἐσόμεθα, μὴ τὸ ἐν τῆς ψυχῆς ἀνεγείραντες, ὅ ἐστιν ἐν ἡμῖν οἷον εἰκὼν τοῦ ἐνὸς <...>; Πῶς δ' ἀν τὸ ἐν αὐτῷ τοῦτο καὶ τὸ ἄνθος τῆς ψυχῆς ἀναλάμψαι ποιήσαιμεν, εἰ μὴ κατὰ νοῦν πρότερον ἐνεργήσαιμεν;*)”.<sup>98</sup>

91 On this passage see Ierodiakonou 2005: 80-81.

92 On the Proclean background of this idea, see Ierodiakonou 2005: 81 n. 30; Trizio 2009a: 92.

93 For a summary of the different interpretations of Eustratios' view on universals, see Ierodiakonou 2005: 72.

94 Eustr. *In VI EN*, 292,28-293-19. See Trizio 2009a: 104-105.

95 See Trizio 2009a: 101.

96 As a matter of fact this image is found only in the *scholia* to the Ecclesiastic Hierarchy. See Rorem-Lamoureux 1998: 118.

97 Proclus, Eclog. De Phil. Chald., fr.4,11.

98 See Proclus, In Parm., 1071,25-27.

The latter passage is so close to Eustratios that we may ponder whether Eustratios is attempting to dissimulate the Proclean roots of his statement by ascribing it to the authority of the orthodox Dionysius. A question which, I believe, can be answered in the positive. Proclus dominates Eustratios' commentaries on Aristotle to such an extent that highly educated readers of the time could hardly have overlooked the strong neoplatonic flavor of the commentator's arguments. These readers, who may most probably be identified as people closely related to the imperial court, rhetorically called φιλόλογοι by Eustratios,<sup>99</sup> must have shared the same literary tastes as Eustratios, including his fondness for Proclus' Neoplatonism and Plutarch, a name mentioned explicitly twice in his commentaries on the *Nicomachean Ethics*.<sup>100</sup>

Eustratios does not merely copy and paste from Proclus, but – and in so doing his usage of this author differs considerably from that of Italo – he re-elaborates Proclus' passages and shapes them to fit the structure of his own arguments.<sup>101</sup> All reference to Proclus' different orders of Gods and souls is missing. Yet this attitude, suggestive of the author's religious concern, never becomes a reconciliation of Proclus with Christianity. Quite the contrary, the commentator is deliberately ambiguous on many crucial points: he posits the existence of a separate Intelligence, which he does not clearly identify with the Divine Intellect. Like Proclus, he speaks of the one in the soul, and when talking about Forms, he regards them as both intelligible contents in the separate Intelligence and self-subsisting entities.<sup>102</sup>

Between Eustratios' death (ca. 1120) and Nicholas of Methone's *Refutation of Proclus' Elements of Theology* (later 1150's-early 1160's) no Byzantine scholar seems to have endorsed Proclus' standpoints to the extent Eustratios did. In his commentaries on Books V, IX and X of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Michael of Ephesos (11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> c.), whose biography remains mysterious, also refers to the Neoplatonists, though not as extensively as Eustratios.<sup>103</sup> Furthermore, Isaak the Sebastokrator, who may be identified either as Anna Komnena's uncle or brother, adopted a rather different strategy when re-editing Proclus' *Tria Opuscula*, christianizing Proclus' treatises on evil and providence in a way that leaves no doubt as to the author's aim of providing a fully Christian explanation of these issues.<sup>104</sup> When compared with these two case studies Eustratios' assumption of the outlines of Proclus' Neoplatonism appears to be a unique case in 12<sup>th</sup> c. Byzantium and is the main reason for his fortune in the Medieval Latin West. In fact, 13<sup>th</sup> c. scholars such as Albert the Great (†1280) will relate Eustratios' Neoplatonism to that of the Arabic source material available in Latin at the time, such as the *Liber de Causis*. Considering the Proclean background of this latter work and Eustratios' general fondness

99 See Eustr., *In VI EN*, 294,28.

100 Eustr. *In I EN*, 5,15; *In VI EN*, 331,32. On Plutarch's importance for the Byzantine *cursus studiorum*, see Wilson 1983: 151.

101 For a case study of this Eustratios attitude, see Trizio 2009a: 92-93.

102 On this, see Trizio 2009a: 103

103 See Luna 2001: 2-32, Steel 2002: 54-57.

104 See Boese 1960: xxii-xxiii.

for Proclus, such a link must have appeared obvious in the eyes of such a medieval master.<sup>105</sup>

### 3. NICHOLAS OF METHONE

The biography of Nicholas, bishop of Methone († ca. 1166), is somewhat mysterious. A *Life of Nicholas* that circulated in 19<sup>th</sup> c. accompanied by a fine portrait of Nicholas himself was nothing less than the work of Constantine Simonides, the famous forger.<sup>106</sup> A look at Nicholas's work, which, besides hagiographical works, includes several anti-Latin treatises and a refutation of the heresy of the Patriarch of Antioch, Sothericos Panteugenos, suggests that he must have been directly involved in the most relevant controversies of his time as a theologian closely related to the Emperor Manuel I Comnenus (1143-1180).<sup>107</sup>

Nicholas' main work, the *Refutation of the Elements of Theology by the Platonic philosopher Proclus the Lycian* (Ἀνάπτυξις τῆς Θεολογικῆς Στοιχειώσεως Πρόκλου τοῦ Λυκίου πλατωνικοῦ φιλοσόφου), is no less controversial than Nicholas's biography. In fact, the refutation of chapter 146 of the *Elements of Theology*, which includes a quote from Gregory of Nazianzus, as found in the modern edition of Nicholas's work, corresponds to a fragment preserved in the manuscript Vat. gr. 1096 (f.61r) under the name of Procopius of Gaza (ca. 460/470- ca. 528).<sup>108</sup> Thus, for a long time it has been thought that Nicholas merely plagiarized an otherwise unknown *Refutation* of Proclus actually written by Procopius;<sup>109</sup> for his pupil Choricius informs us that Procopius committed himself to defending the Christian dogma and rejecting pagan philosophy.<sup>110</sup> However, frequent references to Ps.-Dionysius the Areopagite and the anti-Latin undertones of the Ἀνάπτυξις are a poor fit for Procopius' biography and seem to exclude him as the veritable author of this work.<sup>111</sup>

It has nevertheless been suggested recently that Ἀνάπτυξις is an original work by Nicholas, based upon some earlier lost material by Procopius.<sup>112</sup> In fact - one of the main arguments favoring this view - plagiarisms of

105 See Trizio 2009b: 95-104.

106 The forgery was discovered by Sp. Lampros and the news was published in Draeseke 1898. On Simonides' skill in portrait see Janko 2009: 407-410. The scarce informations concerning Nicholas' life are diligently collected in Angelou 1994: ix-xxiii.

107 On Nicholas' work see Angelou 1984: xxv-xliv. On the theological controversies under Manuel I Komnenos, see Magdalino 1993: 279-290, 316-412.

108 The fragment was discovered by Mai 1831: 274-275 (= PG 87/2, 2792e-h). The manuscript was later described by Stiglmayr 1899: 296-301 and Mercati 1931: 218-223.

109 See Roussos 1893: 57ff.; Draeseke 1895 and 1897; Krumbacher 1897: 85; Tatakis 1949: 38; Aly 1957; Whittaker 1975: 311; Chauvot 1986: 87-88; Matino 2005: 17, n.31. Procopius' authorship of the Ἀνάπτυξις is also accepted in CPG: 7440.

110 Choric. Op. VIII 21, 117-12-22. See also Michael Psellos, Orat. For., 1,287-299.

111 Stiglmayr 1899; Bardenhewer 1901: 478; Dodds 1933, xxxi, n.1; Beck 1954, 415 and 624; Podskalsky 1976: ; Angelou 1984: xlivi-xliv; Rorem-Lamoreaux 1998: 10, n.7.

112 Amato 2010.

Procopian works by Byzantine scholars were frequent,<sup>113</sup> despite the fact that there are also cases of Byzantine works wrongly transmitted under the name of Procopius.<sup>114</sup> More importantly, the manuscript Vat. gr. 1096 contains two versions of the *Ἀνάπτυξις*, ch. 146 (52r<sub>12</sub>-52v<sub>18</sub>; 61r) and ch. 139, the latter of which is in a fragmentary form.<sup>115</sup> The same excerpt from ch. 139 can be found in another manuscript under the name of Procopius, Vat. gr. 604 (f. 46r<sub>36-44</sub>), copied by the same hand that copied the two previously mentioned chapters of the *Ἀνάπτυξις* in Vat. gr. 1096.<sup>116</sup> Since these excerpts show certain different readings, it has been proposed that the copyist had access to two different manuscripts or versions of a lost Procopian refutation of Proclus' *Elements of Theology*, which Nicholas later incorporated into his *Ἀνάπτυξις*.<sup>117</sup>

However, this view should be tested against some paleographic evidence. We are in the lucky position of knowing who copied these excerpts in the two Vatican manuscripts, namely, the 14<sup>th</sup> c. anti-palamite, Isaak Argyros.<sup>118</sup> In fact, the hand of an anonymous close collaborator and member of Isaak's circle is also found in the first part of Vat. gr. 626, probably the earliest manuscript containing the *Ἀνάπτυξις*.<sup>119</sup> Here, however, the attribution of the *Ἀνάπτυξις* to Nicholas, found in the upper margin of f. 121r, belongs to a later hand, suggesting that Isaak and his fellows had access to an acephalous version of the *Ἀνάπτυξις*. Because of this, Isaak himself may have conjectured the Procopian authorship of the fragments contained in the two afore-mentioned Vaticani.<sup>120</sup>

Although there is still room for further findings,<sup>121</sup> the *Ἀνάπτυξις* clearly reflects the intellectual climate of Nicholas' time, which is characterized by frequent complaints among 12<sup>th</sup> c. Byzantine intellectuals over the spreading of Proclus' work. Around the time of the composition of the *Ἀνάπτυξις*, George Tornikes' *Funeral Oration on Anna Comnena* cautiously states that the princess admired Proclus and Iamblichus, but preferred Dionysius the Areopagite and his alleged master Ierotheus.<sup>122</sup> Byzantine scholars such as Theodore Prodromus were questioned concerning their fondness for pagan philosophy,<sup>123</sup> whereas some years after the composition of the *Ἀνάπτυξις*, the consul of the philosopher Michael of Anchialos openly announced that he

113 Amato 2010: 8-10.

114 See the lament for the collapse of Hagia Sophia edited in Michael Psellus, *Orat. Min.*

35. On this see Wuerthle 1917, Mango 1988: 167-169. According to this latter contribution, this text cannot be ascribed to Psellos either.

115 On the existence of two versions of ch. 146 in the Vat. gr. 1096, see Stiglmayr 1899: 299 and Mercati 1931: 265-266.

116 See Bianconi 2008: 354 and Amato 2010: 11.

117 See Amato 2010: 10-12.

118 On Isaak, see PLP I, 1285. On Isaak's, library see Mercati 1931: 229-242; 264-266.

119 On this manuscript see Devresse 1950: 33-34; Turyn 1964: 107-108.

120 See Bianconi 2006: 354.

121 See Westerink 1942 on Psellos' quotation from an alleged Procopian refutation of Proclus' commentary on the Chaldean Oracles.

122 George Tornikes, *Or. 14.* 299,24-26.

123 See Theodore Prodromos, *Poem. 59.* On this see Magdalino 1993: 390-391.

would confine his teaching to Aristotle's logical and natural works.<sup>124</sup> Since these accounts are mostly rhetorical, it is difficult to identify “those who regard as worthy of study the chapters of Proclus the Lycian called “Elements of Theology”, mentioned by Nicholas (2,6-7) as the target of the Ανάπτυξις. These might have been erudite readers from the intellectual elite of the Komnenian society, who concealed their fondness for Proclus by leaving no trace of it in their writing.

Nicholas' Ανάπτυξις aims at testing the different propositions of the *Elements of Theology* against Christian dogmata, in order to show their incompatibility. Thus, he corrects Proclus' statement that “every cause properly so-called transcends its result” (prop. 75), and the related distinction between causes and concomitant causes which Eustratios of Nicaea accepted without reservation,<sup>125</sup> by stating that God is the only true cause transcending creation (77,21-22); whereas this principle does not apply to intra-trinitarian causation where the Father is the cause of the Son and the Holy Spirit, for this process does not involve transcendence of the cause (78,2-4). Yet, Nicholas agrees with Proclus in admitting that the instrument cannot limit the maker's creation – something that “should also be used against Eunomius, who regards the Son as instrumental cause and the Father as the cause properly so-called and the productive one of the Son Himself” (78,10-12).

By the same token, likely because he could find the same distinction in Ps.-Dionysius the Areopagite,<sup>126</sup> Nicholas accepts Proclus' three modes of existence as stated in the *Elements of Theology*, κατ' αἰτίαν, καθ' ὄπαρξιν, κατὰ μέθεξιν (prop. 65), but rejects the multiplicity of causes as something that denies God's role as the universe's sole cause (68,10-12). Furthermore, whilst conceding that “every soul is an incorporeal substance and separable from the body” (prop. 186) Nicholas remarks (163,19-26) that this only holds as true for the rational souls and not for the irrational. Otherwise, suggests Nicholas (163,26-164-5), cribbing from Nemesius of Emesa's *De natura hominis*, one should admit the transmigration of souls from men into animals and vice-versa – a view rejected by not only Christians (as witnessed in one of the articles of Italos' condemnation in the Synodikon),<sup>127</sup> but also by Hellenic philosophers such as Iamblichus.<sup>128</sup>

Like other Byzantine scholars, such as George Pachymeres,<sup>129</sup> Nicholas explains the similarities between Proclus and Ps.-Dionysius on the grounds that the latter was master to the former, who nevertheless “intermingled the seeds of devotion with grievous devilry” (117,27-28). Unsurprisingly, Nicholas refers to Ps.-Dionysius as a corrective to Proclus' views. For

124 Michael of Anchialos, *Oratio Aditialis*, 190,105-108. For further documents concerning 12<sup>th</sup> c. opposition to Proclus and Hellenic philosophy, see Browning 1975; Angelou 1984: lvii-lviii; Magdalino 1993: 332-335; Kaldellis 2007: 225-282, 2009, 2011.

125 Cf. supra xxx.

126 Ps.-Dion. Epist., 9.2,18-22.

127 Synodikon, 57,194.

128 Nem. *De nat.*, 2,34,18-35,14.

129 Georius Pachimeres, *Proem. In op. Dion.*, PG 3: 116A

example, facing prop. 158 (“all elevative causes among the Gods differ both from the purificatory causes and from the conversive kinds”), Nicholas comments that (142,12-18) these three types of causes are found in the one and only God and supports his view that these powers of the intellectual and divine orders come from God Himself by quoting Ps.-Dionysius' Celestial Ierarchy.<sup>130</sup>

Only a few passages are quoted from Gregory of Nazianzos, one of the authorities most invoked by Nicholas, but these passages are referred to more than once in the Αὐάπτυξις. So Gregory's statement – originally intended to defend the Christian metaphysical notion of monarchy against the “Greeks” – that “the monad which existed from the beginning and is moved into a dyad, rests as a Triad”,<sup>131</sup> is present in several loci of the Αὐάπτυξις; this stresses the transcendence of the intra-trinitarian procession vis-à-vis the other processions of beings from the First Cause or refers the notion of 'unmoved' proper to God alone (5,10-11; 20,26-27; 133,20-22). Furthermore, Nicholas (12,30-31) refers to Gregory's famous description of God as that which “contains the whole being, holding it in Himself, like an endless and boundless ocean of reality”<sup>132</sup> in order 1) to qualify the notion of primal Good mentioned in Proclus' statement that “All that in any way participates in the Good is subordinate to the primal Good, which is nothing else but good” (prop. 8); and 2) to reject (49,1-3; 59,16-18) Proclus' arguments that “All that proceeds from another cause is subordinate to principles which get their substance from themselves and have a self-constituted existence” (prop. 40) and “All that is produced by secondary beings is in a greater measure produced from those prior and more determinate principles from which the secondary were themselves derived” (prop. 56). In fact these Proclean arguments contradict God's role as the only cause of the universe.

Against Proclus' theory that “All that is divine has a substance which is goodness, a potency which has the character of unity, and a mode of knowledge which is secret and incomprehensible to all secondary beings alike” (prop. 121) Nicholas once again maintains that all this applies only to God; supporting his view (117,11-12) by referring to Gregory of Nazianzus' statement that “he is not known in Himself, but from His properties, as sense-perception collects them one after the other in order to obtain one single image of the truth”.<sup>133</sup> Finally, Proclus' prop. 198 in the *Elements of Theology* which states that “All that participates in time but has perpetuity of movement is measured by periods”, is refuted by Nicholas, somewhat naively, on the grounds that there is an inherent contradiction between being in time and perpetuity of movement, as suggested by Gregory's saying that “that which is time according to us, is eternity for the eternal realities” (174,7-8).<sup>134</sup>

It is unfortunate that those who appealed to these quotes from Gregory as

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130 Ps.-Dion. De Cael. Hier., 106,22-23

131 Greg. Naz. Or. 29, 2,xxx 11-12.

132 Greg. Naz. Or. 38, PG 36, 317B.

133 Greg. Naz. Or 38, PG 36, 317BC.

134 Greg. Naz. Or 38, PG 36, 320B.

evidence favoring Procopian authorship of the Αὐάπτυξις<sup>135</sup> did not realize the importance of this author for the Byzantine anti-Latin polemicists. Most quotations from this Church Father present in the Αὐάπτυξις – like that used for the controversial refutation of prop. 146 of the *Elements of Theology*, for instance, which resulted in a debate on the authorship of the Αὐάπτυξις (“the monad which existed since the beginning and is moved into a dyad, rests as a Triad”)<sup>136</sup> – are present in a vast number of anti-Latin writings by Byzantine scholars like Nicholas as a tool to defend the procession of the Holy Spirit *ex solo patre*.<sup>137</sup> But even before Nicholas the afore-mentioned quote from Gregory is diligently mentioned in the *Panoplia Dogmatica* by 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> c. court-theologian Euthymios Zigabenos<sup>138</sup> and appears in the anti-iconoclastic writings of Euthymios' contemporary Eustratios of Nicaea.<sup>139</sup> Further discussions of this quote from Gregory can be found in Michael Psellos' theological writings<sup>140</sup> and in John Italos' philosophical treatises.<sup>141</sup>

Often Nicholas ridicules Proclus, introducing a comment of his with the formula “well, well” (116,12), or addressing him ironically, as in the author's rhetorical comment on prop. 164 (“All those henads are supra-mundane whereof all the unparticipated soul enjoys participation”) “if the unparticipated soul is one, oh wisest Proclus, in what sense do you say 'all' as referred to many of them?” (145,8-9).<sup>142</sup> Nicholas is more interested in rejecting Proclus' view as incompatible with Christian truths than in delving more deeply into Proclus' thought. Had he done so, he would probably have understood how it is possible in Proclus' view, for example, that “every soul take its proximate origin from an intelligence” (prop. 193), whereas at the same time “every soul is self-animated” (prop. 189), in the sense that it is self-constituted. In fact, eager to refer the notion of self-constitution to God alone, Nicholas does not realize - or is not interesting in admitting - that there is no contradiction between deriving from something and being self-constituted in Proclean metaphysics.<sup>143</sup> Yet, Nicholas still concedes that the soul is self-constituted in the same way that Aristotle regards substance as self-subsistent vis-à-vis the accidents (167,18-21; 24-26),<sup>144</sup> which is the very same argument he uses (49,11-13) in regard to Proclus' more general statement that “All that proceeds from another cause is subordinate to principles which get their substance from themselves and have a self-constituted existence” (prop. 40).

Whereas Ps.-Dionysius is used to correct Proclus' theology, the bishop of

135 See e.g. Whittaker 1975.

136 Cf. supra xxx.

137 Nich. Meth. Or. 7, 317,17-20. See also Gregorius Palamas, *De processione spiritus sancti orationes duae*, I,20,13-16; Marcus Eugenicus, *Testimonia spiritum sanctum ex patre procedere probantia*, n.54.

138 Euthymios Zigabenos, *Panoplia Dogmatica*, PG130, 61D.

139 Eustr. Or. 6, 152,31-153,2.

140 Mich. Psell. Theol. 20, xxx

141 John Italos, QQ 69, 115,36-29.

142 On this comment see Dodds 1933: 284.

143 See also Dodds 1933: 299.

144 Arist. Met., V,30,1025a30-32.

Methone uses Aristotle in order to correct him philosophically. Eustratios of Nicaea had charged Aristotle with sophistry for having criticized Plato's Ideal Good, which he himself defended with Proclus' words.<sup>145</sup> Nicholas reverses this, and uses Aristotle to counter Proclus, someone he considers (3,16-17) to be "young insolent". Thus, in rejecting Proclus' belief that "if the potency of any finite body be infinite, it is incorporeal" (prop. 96), Nicholas notes that this contradicts Aristotle's denial of the existence of an infinite body (94,23-24).<sup>146</sup> Commenting on prop. 14 of the *Elements of Theology* ("All that exists is either moved or unmoved; and if the former, either by itself or by another, that is, intrinsically or extrinsically: so that everything is unmoved, intrinsically moved, or extrinsically moved") Nicholas claims (19,23-26) that it contradicts not only Aristotle but the other philosophers as well, for here Proclus – against Aristotle's *De interpretatione*<sup>147</sup> – identifies the notion of "all" with that of "being universal". Finally, both in the *Ἀνάπτυξις* (160,18-21) and in his writing against Sothericos Panteugenos Nicholas refers to Aristotle's definition of the Platonic ideas as "twittering" (*τερετίσματα*),<sup>148</sup> demonstrating his contribution to the suppression of Plato and the Platonic tradition in favor of Aristotle, an attempt being made by the intellectual establishment at the time.<sup>149</sup>

Nicholas's strategy in criticizing Proclus consists of denying entities other than God any causative power in order to avoid polytheism. So, under the authority of Ps.-Dionysius, Nicholas (79,10-12) contends that the ideas of beings are not self-subsistent realities, but God's "divine and good volitions".<sup>150</sup> Interestingly, in his writing against Soterichos Panteugenos, Nicholas endorses the same view by stating that even Plato did not regard the ideas as a self-subsisting hypostasis,<sup>151</sup> a view that is reminiscent of Eustratios of Nicaea's claim that the ideas are "enhypostatic" in the Divine Intellect according to the Platonists.<sup>152</sup>

The link with Eustratios is problematic. Concerning the notion of ἀρχικὰ αἴτια, the *Ἀνάπτυξις* refers (95,26) to a yet unidentified ζήτημα on the many gods propounded by "the martyr Eustratios", which investigates the consequences of admitting several principal causes, "whether these are all equal in their substance and power or in every way among these some are more important while others are less" (*πότερον ἵστα πάντα καὶ κατ' οὐσίαν καὶ κατὰ δύναμιν καὶ πάντη αὐτὰ ἢ τὰ μὲν μείζω, τὰ δὲ ἐλάττω*). No matter how one understands the word "martyr", it seems that the only way to refer this ζήτημα to Eustratios, the deposed Bishop of Nicaea, is to go back to his anti-Latin works, where he rejects the idea that the Father and the Son are two primal causes "according to their substance" (*κατ' οὐσίαν*). Nicholas

145 Eustr. In I EN, 45,32-38; 50,30-33.

146 Arist. Phys., 205b35-206a7. See Dodds 1933: 250.

147 Arist. De Int., 17b12.

148 Nich. Meth. Or. 6, 324,19-23

149 See Magdalino 1993: 332.

150 Ps.-Dion. Areop. De Div. Nom. 188,6-10.

151 Nich. Meth. Or. 6, 324,9-19.

152 Eustr. In I EN, 40,22-27.

himself suggests this in referring one of his criticisms of Proclus to the Latin as well, who are said to admit the existence of “two primal causes of the Spirit” (δύο τὰ ἀρχικὰ αἴτια τοῦ πνεύματος), that is to say the Father and the Son.<sup>153</sup> It may not have been so problematic to quote Eustratios at the time of the Ἀνάπτυξις’s composition, since by then the former Bishop of Nicaea had been rehabilitated and used as a theological authority at the synod of the Blanchernai (1156).<sup>154</sup> In fact, a passage from Eustratios’ treatise against iconoclasm is surely the source of Nicholas’ statement that God is that which “limits everything, although He is not limited by anything” (143,2-3).<sup>155</sup>

The Ἀνάπτυξις does not appear to have enjoyed great fortune among the later generations of Byzantine theologians, even though they were just as concerned about the spread of profane learning as Nicholas was.<sup>156</sup> As a matter of fact, Barlaam the Calabrian used Proclus at length in his dispute with Gregory Palamas in the 14<sup>th</sup> c.<sup>157</sup> It may be fruitful to study the refutation of ch. 139 in the Vat. gr. 1096 (108r15-27), there attributed to Procopius and included within the refutation of the pro-palamite John VI Kantacuzenos by the anti-palamite copyist, Isaak Argyros. These fragments of the Ἀνάπτυξις contain some interesting clues concerning the soul’s participation and union with the Divine nature, which is said to take place κατὰ χάριν. Since the participants in the 14th c. Palamite controversy debated this topic heatedly, the Ἀνάπτυξις may well have been useful source-material in some way or other, but it would seem that this was insufficient for the Ἀνάπτυξις to achieve the status of a reference work among the Byzantine scholars of the time.

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153 See also Nich. Meth, Or. 7, 360,25-26.

154 See Magdalino 1993: 279. A series of syllogisms from Eustratios’ work are found in Andronikos Kamateros’ *Sacred Arsenal* (in Monacensis Graecus 229, ff. 1-309, 82v-84v), written not many years after the Ἀνάπτυξις. I am indebted for this information to the modern editor of Kamateros’ work, Alessandra Bucossi.

155 See Eustr. Or. 6, 153,8-9.

156 For an overview on Proclus in Byzantium see Benakis 1987.

157 See Sinkewicz 1981, 1982; Trizio 2011.

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